



Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 757

June 8, 2015

Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services

Jack Dempsey

Oregon Nurses Association

Co-Chairs Bates and Nathanson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association in support of Senate Bill 757, which requires a study of the effectiveness of Oregon's current programs designed to recruit and retain health care providers in rural and underserved areas.

The Oregon Nurses Association is Oregon's oldest and largest nursing union and professional association, and is proud to represent more than 13,000 registered nurses, advanced practice nurses and nursing students in Oregon. Oregon nurses make up the largest segment of Oregon's health care work force, and work in nearly every health care setting, from large hospitals to small local clinics, from corrections to school-based health centers and in community-based public health.

As the Legislature has reviewed Oregon's current patchwork of provider incentive programs, legislators and other stakeholders have asked valid questions about these programs' relative effectiveness and the data supporting continuation or modification of these programs.

We believe there continues to be a need for provider incentive programs. The analysis proposed in SB 757 will give the Legislature actionable data it can use to most effectively allocate resources to attract and retain health care providers in rural and underserved parts of the state.

The Health Care Workforce Committee, a subcommittee of the Oregon Health Policy Board, recommended studying the effectiveness of Oregon's provider incentive programs. This bill would accomplish that.

ONA believes it is appropriate for the state's nursing workforce center, the Oregon Center for Nursing (OCN), to partner with the Oregon Healthcare Workforce Institute (OHWI) to research and analyze the impact of these incentive programs on the nursing workforce.

In particular, Oregon's nurse practitioners (NPs) are a vital part of our health care workforce and are eligible for participation in provider incentive programs. Numerous national studies have highlighted the important role NP's have to help us meet our growing health care demands. Thorough analysis of this part of the health care workforce and its connection to incentive programs is critical, and OCN is the entity best posed to complete this work.

ONA urges your support of SB 757 to better inform discussion of health care provider incentives in future sessions.